



Cornell University

Search for the Assistant Vice President for Student Health and Wellbeing

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY

THE SEARCH

[Cornell University](#), a private, Ivy League university and the land-grant university for New York State, is seeking a student-centered, collaborative, and engaged leader to serve as its Assistant Vice President for Student Health and Wellbeing (AVP) in the division of Student & Campus Life (SCL). Recognized as a national leader in college health, the AVP reports to the Vice President for SCL and leads the strategic direction and management oversight for student support and services through the creative collaboration of mental health and medical units that foster a holistic view of wellbeing at Cornell as a foundation for student success. With experience providing health services to college-aged populations, authentic humility, and a collaborative approach, the AVP will engender trust, foster a collegial environment, and bring out the best in students and colleagues in a culture where wellbeing can thrive.

This position will provide broad leadership and oversight of all aspects of [Cornell Health](#): the Skorton Center for Health Initiatives, Medical and Clinical Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Occupational Medicine, Student Disability Services (SDS), and Administrative Services. As the campus provider of collaborative medical and mental health services, Cornell Health serves more than 80% of Cornell students each year, with about 22% of students accessing mental health services (equaling 110,000+ in-person and virtual health care visits annually). The 250 talented, dedicated, and co-located multidisciplinary staff – medical clinicians, licensed mental health professionals, nutritionists, physical therapists, behavioral health consultants, public health educators, student service professionals, and others – coordinate these integrated services through collaborative care teams. In-person services are offered in a state-of-the-art 55,000 sq. ft. facility in the heart of campus, which welcomes 800 students each day during the academic year.

This is an opportune time to lead student health and wellbeing at Cornell. Cornell is recognized nationally for its [mental health initiatives](#) on campus and earned the Jed Campus Seal in 2013 and the Active Minds Healthy Campus Award in 2015. In Fall 2018, President Martha E. Pollack announced that the University would engage in a comprehensive review of student mental health. In the years since that announcement and under the oversight of the Executive Accountability Committee (EAC), the student [Mental Health Review](#) began in 2019, and the final report was delivered in spring 2020. Informed by this initiative, Cornell has used a [Mental Health Framework](#) since 2020 to guide a campus-wide approach to student health and

wellbeing and provides opportunities for every member of the campus community to contribute. This comprehensive public health approach reflects the best practices to guide a campus-wide approach to student health and wellbeing. Because the Mental Health Framework is the bedrock of Cornell's prevention, intervention, and support efforts on campus, it serves as a frame for the 130 recommendations that were included in the [Final Report](#) of the Mental Health Review. Additionally, in October 2022, the administration [signed the Okanagan Charter](#), formally pledging to promote health and wellbeing across all facets of university life.

Reporting to the Vice President for Student & Campus Life, the AVP will contribute significantly to SCL's purpose to inspire student transformation through strategic planning, goal achievement, budget management, service delivery, staff development, and overall success of an evolving and integrated student experience in a highly complex, academically rigorous, and decentralized institution. With a sharp focus on the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, it is essential that the AVP approaches the work through a health equity lens and leads with a deep commitment to belonging and inclusion that educates, supports, and empowers staff to meet all students where they are. The AVP will be a visible SCL division leader and college health expert on and off campus who positions Cornell Health as a student health and wellbeing hub for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students and convenes key leaders to activate initiatives that prioritize and address the diverse student health needs in Ithaca and [Cornell AgriTech](#) in Geneva, NY.

Cornell University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Cornell's mission is to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge, to educate the next generation of global citizens, and to promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community. Cornell also aims, through public service, to enhance the lives and livelihoods of students, the people of New York, and others around the world.

Founded in 1865, Cornell University is a remarkable community of scholars, educators, students, staff, and alumni who are deeply influenced by proud traditions and a set of cherished founding principles, including Ezra Cornell's ambition to "found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." It is a world-class research institution known for the breadth and rigor of its curricula and an academy dedicated to preparing young people to be well-educated and well-rounded citizens of the world. Its faculty and students believe in the critical importance of knowledge—both theoretical and applied—as a means of improving the human condition and solving the world's problems. It embraces traditional liberal arts education, the practical applications of knowledge, and interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to research and teaching. It champions free and open intellectual expression and academic freedom, treats all individuals with dignity and respect, celebrates differences and diversity of viewpoints and identities, and promotes accessibility.

Today, Cornell consists of 16 schools and colleges. Across the main Ithaca campus, the Weill Cornell Medicine campuses in New York City and Qatar, Cornell Tech in New York City, and Cornell AgriTech in Geneva, NY, the University enrolls over 16,000 undergraduates and over 10,000 graduate and professional students. Twenty percent of these students are international in origin, representing over 130 countries.

Cornell employs approximately 8,700 staff and 1,700 professorial faculty members in Ithaca and at Cornell Tech, and an additional 5,000 staff and 1,600 faculty members at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City. Cornell also oversees the Cornell Cooperative Extension System, which has full-time staff in every county of New York state.

Cornell is home to a significant number of interdisciplinary research centers, which play important roles in helping academic units recruit and retain outstanding faculty, maintain state-of-the-art infrastructure, catalyze cutting-edge, multidisciplinary research and academic programs, and serve as springboards for partnerships. These span the physical, natural, applied, social, and biomedical sciences, engineering, and the arts and humanities. Together, they further the University's instructional, research, and public service missions in ways that push the boundaries of traditional academic structures.

Cornell is situated in picturesque Ithaca, New York, the heart of the Finger Lakes. Ithaca is home to two academic institutions, state parks, waterfalls, gorges, and a wide range of art galleries, theaters, eateries, wineries, and breweries. Ithaca has something to suit all ages and interests.

DIVISION OF STUDENT & CAMPUS LIFE

The division of [Student and Campus Life](#) serves all Cornell students - undergraduate, graduate, and professional - and strives to promote an educational environment where students can thrive in pursuit of their academic and personal goals. The Division of Student and Campus Life provides a broad array of programs and services designed to support students and the campus community, including [Athletics and Physical Education](#), [Dean of Students Office](#), Campus & Community Engagement, [Cornell Health](#), Campus Life Enterprise Services, the [David M. Einhorn Center for Community Engagement](#), and [Cornell Career Services](#). The Division is comprised of more than 1,300 full-time staff and has an annual operating budget of over \$370 million.

Leadership

[Dr. Ryan Lombardi](#) serves as the Vice President for Student and Campus Life at Cornell University. VP Lombardi received an undergraduate degree in Music Education from West Chester University, a master's degree in Higher Education Administration from the University of Kansas, and a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from North Carolina State University. Prior to joining Cornell in 2015, VP Lombardi was the Vice President for Student Affairs at Ohio University.

CORNELL HEALTH

Cornell Health is a deeply collaborative unit within the Division of Student and Campus Life. Its mission is to foster lifelong learning and wellbeing through innovative services and strategies that promote the physical, emotional, and social health of individuals and the diverse campus community. Cornell Health is committed to providing respectful, responsive care to all individuals who rely on its services. Cornell Health provides primary and acute care medical services, mental health care, student disability services, physical therapy, nutrition services, pharmacy services, and support for students across Cornell. Specialized teams address college student health concerns like alcohol use, disordered eating, and student-athlete health and provide support for students with chronic or serious health conditions.

All under the broad oversight of the AVP, Cornell Health is divided into the following functional areas:

Skorton Center for Health Initiatives

In addition to the direct-care services provided to patients and clients, Cornell Health staff members help lead campus-wide initiatives to improve health and protect against potential harm in the community. Using population-based strategies, Cornell Health public health specialists, health educators, and communications professionals work to advance culture change and promote healthy behaviors in the areas of mental health, alcohol and other drugs, sexual violence, hazing, and communicable illness management. Staff members from the Skorton Center for Health Initiatives lead many of these efforts through collaboration with campus colleagues, leadership on university councils and committees, and educational programming and campaigns. The Skorton Center advances student and campus health through institutional leadership, education, research, and public engagement. Through collaboration with clinical colleagues and campus partners, the Skorton Center provides strategic direction for public health approaches to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing and the prevention of suicide, alcohol and other drug abuse, sexual violence, and hazing.

Medical and Clinical Services

Cornell Health provides holistic clinical care to address students' biopsychosocial needs within a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH), population health, psychiatry services, and data-driven primary care approach to service delivery. Staff includes clinicians (MD/DO/PA/NP), nursing (RN/LPN/CMA), nutrition/dietitians (RDN), physical therapists (PT), and laboratory, pharmacy, and radiology professionals. The primary care model is supported by clinical program areas: sports medicine (including the provision of primary care and team physician responsibility to over 1200 intercollegiate athletes, clinical oversight of athletic trainers, and communication with coaches), sexual health (including coordination with the Tompkins County Health Department on issues related to campus and community public health), eating disorders (including communication with campus partners and national treatment centers to coordinate care for students in treatment and recovery), urgent care (including oversight of a physician-led, nurse-delivered care team to support rapid access to self-care guidance), physical therapy,

nutrition, and behavioral health (all of which include opportunities for immediate and routine referral from primary care to support students' holistic needs while on campus).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

With over 40 multidisciplinary staff members, CAPS serves approximately 20% of the student population, with over 24,000 visits each year. Services include brief goal-focused interventions, individual and group counseling, skill-building workshops, and referrals to specialized care. CAPS staff members also support the mental health of the campus environment by engaging with student groups, providing faculty and staff with education and consultation about how to best identify and support students in distress, and partnering with colleagues on campus mental health initiatives. The CAPS staff also includes behavioral health consultants (PhD, LCSW, PsyD). CAPS staff members collaborate with primary care medical staff and others to provide whole-person care to students.

Occupational Medicine

Cornell Health Occupational Medicine serves Cornell staff, faculty, and students in Ithaca and at remote facilities across the state. The unit collaborates with campus partners and local, regional, and state healthcare providers and public health agencies to prevent occupational and environmental injury and illness and support the University's research mission. The occupational medicine team includes administrative staff, and medical and nursing professionals with certifications and training in occupational medicine, internal medicine, public health, hearing conservation, and spirometry. The alignment and oversight of Occupational Medicine within the Department of Cornell Health is currently under review.

Student Disability Services (SDS)

SDS works in partnership with Cornell faculty, staff, and students to ensure that all aspects of student life are accessible, equitable, and inclusive of individuals with disabilities. SDS is responsible for establishing and disseminating criteria for disability services, meeting with students to discuss access needs, receiving and storing confidential disability documentation to support a student's eligibility for disability services and accommodations, collaborate with faculty and staff regarding essential course and/or program requirements and appropriate reasonable accommodations, and provide campus leadership of diversity efforts that promote disability equity and inclusion.

Administrative Services

The administrative services team provides infrastructure and support for all Cornell Health departments, programs, and services, including Health Informatics, Quality Initiatives, Communications, Facilities, and Planning and Finance.

THE ROLE: ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The AVP is a member of the [SCL senior leadership team](#) and will provide innovative and strategic leadership for a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to student health and wellbeing. The AVP will provide senior leadership for the development, implementation, and evaluation of campus-wide health initiatives through engagement with the institutional leadership and serve on or lead health-related campus committees. The AVP will provide broad leadership and oversight for all administration, policies, budgets, services, communication strategies, and staff within the department of Cornell Health. In total, the position is responsible for approximately 250 employees and a \$36M operating budget. Cornell Health's revenue streams include university allocation, health fees, insurance revenue, and fees charged at the time of service. The AVP's five direct reports include: Senior Director, Cornell Health; Interim Director, Student Disability Services; Director, Skorton Center for Health Initiatives; Interim Chief Clinical Officer and Medical Director and Director; Counseling & Psychological Services. The senior leadership team is an empowered and collaborative group that facilitates an engaged leadership model and enjoys effective and respectful relationships with one another forged through the demands of the last few years of work.

The AVP leads, develops, and promotes a qualified, professional, and well-trained staff to approach their work with a growth mindset, supports the departmental and divisional mission, and ensures compliance with all policies, regulations, accreditation standards, and laws. The AVP will serve as a key thought partner for the Vice President for Student & Campus Life and, in collaboration with other members of the senior leadership team, should be able to function seamlessly in the VP's absence.

The AVP is expected to be a leader not only within their portfolio but also within SCL and the broader institution. Alongside their peers, the AVP will promote a culture within the division that balances the need to support students in their academic and personal endeavors with the need to encourage their growth into autonomous and independent adults. They will work collaboratively with peers in SCL and build strong relationships with staff in the various colleges across Cornell. They will possess [shared SCL values](#), a strong sense of self, and the capacity to lead with collaboration, effective decision-making, credibility, and trustworthy leadership to achieve the vision and goals of the division.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The AVP will have the ability to address a set of opportunities and challenges that include, but are not limited to:

Collaborate and coordinate throughout Cornell Health and across campus.

Cornell Health is a student health and wellbeing hub in a decentralized environment that serves a diverse student body with varied needs. Across the institution, the AVP plays a pivotal role in assisting the University to enhance student success by working collaboratively and creatively with the entire campus community to define and support wellbeing at Cornell. The AVP will facilitate collaboration across campus

to assess real needs, develop close partnerships, and provide outstanding service to constituencies. The AVP will partner and collaborate with key administrators and other colleagues across SCL and campus to provide student development, wellness, and other health-related consultation services and public health functions. Key internal relationships include the Office of the Dean of Students, Athletics & Physical Education, Housing & Residential Life, Risk Management, Environmental Health & Safety, as well as the deans, faculty, and staff of the undergraduate, graduate, and professional colleges and schools for opportunities to bridge the various dimensions of wellbeing inside and outside of the classroom. The AVP will facilitate collaboration with faculty on research relevant to Cornell Health programs and services, engage in multi-institutional research collaborations to evaluate innovative approaches to prevention, intervention, and service delivery, and conduct other research as needed to support program goals. Opportunities exist for the AVP to explore synergies with Weill Cornell Medicine to expand and deepen services provided across all campuses.

Develop a strategic vision and champion a unified identity for Cornell Health.

Working with an engaged leadership approach, the AVP will energize and unify staff around a shared vision, priorities, goals, and objectives. This vision should incorporate national best practices in college health, student and campus needs across all student types, and reflect the distinctive Cornell culture. The AVP will lead the development and evaluation of strategic planning activities that are in concert with the goals of the University and take into account key health and wellbeing issues on college campuses today, including confidentiality, threat assessment, infectious disease/public health, benchmarking and quality assurance, and parental involvement. The AVP will oversee the collaborative development and implementation of short- and long-range plans, clearly set and maintain appropriate campus expectations, and provide an organizational framework that supports a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to developmental and wellbeing opportunities across the various areas of oversight.

The AVP will effectively communicate and champion excellence in student health and wellbeing clinical and non-clinical services. As a principal advisor to the VP, the AVP will pose challenging questions on even the most difficult topics and speak with a clear and trusted voice in leadership deliberations. In moments of crisis or conflict, they will draw on both expertise and creativity to offer constructive ideas and devise effective solutions.

Serve as a visible student life leader and advocate for student health on campus and beyond.

The position is expected to be a highly visible member of the University community that interacts across divisional lines and represents SCL internally and externally, including with community and governmental agencies as well as the general public on health-related matters as appropriate. Cornell students are eager to engage directly with campus administrators at all levels within the University. The AVP will engage with students, build trust and respect, and provide a model of engagement with students for other administrators and faculty. This individual will be expected to sustain a high level of involvement with students and be deeply engaged in their campus experiences. As social media and technology change the

way students interact with one another and the world, the AVP must understand these changes and use these tools effectively. The AVP will be an accessible and approachable advocate for student and staff needs to improve services, efficiencies, support, and resources.

The AVP and other Cornell Health leaders will represent SCL and the University with local/regional hospitals, local mental and public health agencies, and the New York State Department of Public Health, among others, on community health-related matters; ensure compliance with relevant federal and state laws; and serve as a knowledgeable resource for regulatory and statutory requirements, licensing requirements and accreditation standards.

Provide inspiring and supportive leadership to a large, diverse, and high-functioning team.

The AVP recruits, hires, retains, supervises, and provides ongoing support to unit directors and establishes expectations for the overall environment of the department and the performance of the staff. This leader will have a high sense of integrity, welcome feedback, and hold themselves and their team accountable for an engaged and collaborative leadership approach and change management process. The AVP will promote and sustain the ability of staff members to effectively deliver quality customer service within the context of all aspects of job performance while preserving a healthy work-life balance for the wellbeing of staff, which is directly connected to the quality of the services they provide. The AVP will lead, mentor, develop, and evaluate a strong leadership team committed to a shared leadership model, innovative practices, collaboration, quality services, community support, and health equity. The AVP will support this well-functioning team in continuing to enhance collaboration among the areas within Cornell Health.

Empower all services to have a trauma-informed, multicultural, and equity-minded approach.

Cornell prides itself in being a place where intercultural skills are developed and used everywhere: throughout its diverse campus groups, with community partners, within classrooms, and in its workplaces. Cornell recognizes that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences bring great value to education, discovery, creativity, and engagement. Therefore, it is imperative that the AVP lead a student health and wellbeing workplace that equips staff to truly serve all students. The AVP will encourage Cornell to create spaces for marginalized students and staff to discuss their unique needs and experiences, address racial disparities in healthcare, and strive for health equity.

Use a data-informed approach to evaluate services and fortify procedures.

The AVP is responsible for establishing collaborative systems and processes to ensure effective and efficient delivery of health and wellbeing-related services and strategies to the campus. The AVP, in conjunction with their staff, will constructively collaborate on a regular basis with other offices and campus constituencies to develop and deliver a holistic, aligned array of medical and mental health services to students. The AVP will strengthen existing models and provide leadership and planning for complementary on-campus programming, including preventative programs and those that serve

undergraduate and graduate students who are new and continuing students. This leader will ensure ongoing excellence in training, outcome-based assessments of programs, and evaluations tied to student success are executed and that findings are shared with appropriate audiences in and outside of the division. The AVP will also ensure efficient and sustainable procedures are in place and the organization is properly designed to support programming innovation that captures the evolving and diverse needs of college health.

Manage the budget, steward resources, and secure funding opportunities.

The AVP has ultimate responsibility for the budget, planning, and development for Cornell Health. The AVP is responsible for ensuring responsible areas dedicate resources to where they are most needed. To plan for adequate space to house evolving Cornell Health programs and services, the AVP will provide oversight of revenue enhancement and cost-saving initiatives.

There is an opportunity for the AVP to partner with alumni and donors seeking to support the wellbeing of students by providing resources that support the education and training advancements necessary to meet students' demands.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

While no single candidate will likely have all the ideal qualifications, candidates should possess many of the following preferred qualifications and characteristics:

- Advanced degree in one or more areas focused on student health, such as public or community health education, mental health, medical services, or a related field.
- A terminal degree (EdD, PhD, JD, PsyD, etc., in a related field or MD or DO in a primary care specialty) and experience, including medical and mental health services, is preferred.
- At least ten years of progressively responsible experience in higher education, health care management, or relevant settings that demonstrate preparedness for the high-level administrative responsibilities of the role.
- A deep understanding of and ability to articulate the connection between health and wellbeing and student success.
- A demonstrated track record of advancing equity and enhancing inclusiveness; an ability to bring groups and individuals with differing opinions to common ground.
- A track record of sincere engagement with students, staff, the campus, and the community; a strong, visible presence and active participation in a range of student interests and activities; demonstrated capacity to communicate broadly across the University, cultivate and sustain collegial relationships, and build unity around difficult issues; an active listener, facilitator, convener, and mediator; the flexibility, resiliency, and creativity to thrive in a lean environment.

- Proven skills as a leader and manager, supervisory experience, demonstrated ability to mentor, develop, and support staff, and provide successful oversight of people, budget, and space; a track record for inspiring colleagues with energy and dedication to their professional development, as well as a commitment to clarity and accountability; capacity to lead and manage change in a large, complex, and highly decentralized environment.
- Experience in and knowledge of student development theory and student affairs trends in higher education, including topics such as hazing, sexual assault, and mental health.
- Experience with outcomes-based assessment, information technology evaluation and implementation, and budget development and fiscal management.
- A liveliness of intellect and a commitment to engage collaboratively with faculty colleagues, responding effectively to their needs and concerns; a record of partnering with constituents to advance the integration of health and wellbeing campus-wide.
- Sophisticated interpersonal skills and superb judgment; outstanding written and verbal communication skills; the ability to persuade and encourage others; a firm but fair approach to the resolution of conflict; the capacity to make and stand by difficult decisions, always mindful of the need for fairness, consistency, and the potential impact of each decision on individuals and the broader community.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Natalie Leonhard, Partner
Tiffany Weber, Managing Associate
Kendra Moleé, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Apply online:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/cornell-university/assistant-vice-president-health-and-wellbeing-student-campus-life>

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities. Cornell University is an innovative Ivy League university and a great place to work. Our inclusive community of scholars, students, and staff impart an uncommon sense of larger purpose and contribute creative ideas to further the University's mission of teaching, discovery, and engagement.